

Report of External Evaluation and Review

National Council of YMCAs of New
Zealand

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 26 January 2012

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Location:	Head Office, Wellington
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1991
Number of students:	Domestic: 864 (300 part-time)
Number of staff:	95 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<p>National Council of YMCAs of New Zealand (YMCA) receives funding to deliver programmes for mature and youth learners. Programmes currently offered contain unit standards included in the following national qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 2)• National Certificate in Security (Level 3)• National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3)• National Certificate in Computing (Level 2)• National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing (Levels 2 and 3)• National Certificate of Educational Achievement (Levels 1 and 2)

In addition, learners can currently be assessed against unit standards and achievement standards in English and mathematics as well as unit standards in the following areas:

- Driver licensing (Endorsement F, Class 1 and 2)
- Computing and Business Administration (level 3)
- Engineering (level 2)
- Outdoors Education.

Sites: Nelson, Tokoroa, Gisborne, Hastings, Tauranga, New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Whanganui, Masterton, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru, Invercargill.

Distinctive characteristics: YMCA is made up of 13 federal associations nationally. The education programme committee consists of four education managers and a quality management coordinator who meet to discuss compliance requirements and learner outcomes and to develop the overall organisation's strategic plan. The chair of the YMCA education committee is based in Invercargill.

The head office in Wellington has two staff to look after the allocation of funding to branches and to make decisions on which programmes to deliver.

These programmes are: Steps, Workplace Computing, Heavy Trade, Light Engineering, Workplace learning, Health Care, Intensive Literacy and Numeracy, Adventure Based Learning, Wise Mums, Steps (Skills to Employment), Your Choice, Got to Get a job, Horizons, Pathways, Vision Youth, Y's Choice, Y's Home Base.

Recent significant changes: None

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous external evaluation and review, in December 2009, YMCA received a statement of Highly Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment.

YMCA has met the NZQA 2010 external moderation requirements, and has met the external moderation requirements of other standard-setting bodies' unit standards for which it reports credits.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The external evaluation and review of YMCA included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy. The EER also focussed on the following programmes:

- Employment Skills. This programme operates under different titles at various sites. For example, it is known as Steps in Timaru, National Certificate in Employment Skills in Nelson, and Workplace Computing in Tauranga.

This area was selected to enable comparisons with the previous EER outcome for this area, and it is the main programme delivered across most of the YMCA sites.

In addition, the following programmes were selected based on locations that had not been involved in the previous two NZQA external quality assurance activities (EER and audit):

- National Certificate in Security (Level 3)
- Heavy Trade (Classes 1-5)
- National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3).

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

The EER was conducted on site at Timaru, Nelson, and Tauranga over four days. The EER was carried out by a team of four evaluators who interviewed a sample of staff and learners at each site visited. The interviews included education managers, federation chief executive officers (CEOs), learners, the Nelson employment broker, and tutors for all the relevant focus areas. Supporting documentation was also reviewed to confirm evidence gathered on site. This documentation included learner surveys, monthly education manager reports, quality coordinator monthly analysis, YMCA newsletter Tauranga, TEC summary performance reports, site records of learner achievements, and tutor meeting minutes.

YMCA has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **National Council of YMCAs of New Zealand (YMCA)**.

The YMCA federation of associations is meeting the most important needs of its learners as they achieve high employment outcomes, as well as growth in personal skills and their abilities to study at higher levels. These achievements are assisted by the organisation's resource planning, such as providing employment brokers, as well as giving the tutors the flexibility to provide support to help learners to achieve their goals.

The value of the programmes to the community as well as individuals is strong as each centre offers programmes alongside educational training. For example, the parenting skills, health, and OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) programmes mean that families can be involved. This provides a holistic environment which supports the organisation's overall vision of building stronger families and communities. Attendance figures are high and thus course completion rates are high, indicating that learners value the opportunity to learn.

Programmes are developed according to industry needs, determined by feedback from employers and the organisation's own assessment of regional employment needs. The resources are reviewed regularly to ensure they are current and relevant to the learners' needs and contain tasks that help learners to gain the skills that employers desire. These include personal communication and presentation skills, as well as industry-relevant skills for security work and heavy vehicle licences.

Overall, the ability of tutors to respond to the needs of learners is a result of the direction of the national education programme committee in facilitating learning between sites to improve practices and outcomes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **National Council of YMCAs of New Zealand (YMCA)**.

The organisation has demonstrated that its training programmes are effective by reference to the learners' employment outcomes, but also from feedback received. The organisation has a multi-layered approach to gathering feedback from tutors, learners, and employers. This structure enables it to respond to any issues identified at regional level and to make improvements.

Tutors meet weekly to discuss issues, and reports to management are reviewed at twice-yearly education management team meetings as well as at monthly conference calls. These processes are effective in monitoring the overall

achievement of funding requirements and determining the relevance of programmes. However, the organisation has yet to implement a meta-analysis, using the data collected from each region to conduct internal benchmarking of results at a national level.

In addition, the formalisation of employer feedback from each region would help with ensuring that programme content remains relevant.

TEO response

YMCA has agreed to the factual accuracy of this report.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Over the past three years, YMCA has demonstrated that it is achieving its aim of developing learners' skills and attributes to make them suitable for employment. As most of the programmes are funded by the TEC, they are measured by the number of trainees that achieve a minimum of 20 unit standard credits, a minimum of three unit standards, and the percentage of learners that enter into employment or go on to further study on the completion of the course. The organisation has demonstrated that it has increased unit standard credit and qualification achievement rates for learners, as well as increasing their personal confidence and communication skills.

Overall, YMCA has high success in training workers for employment. Over 60 per cent of learners are in employment at three months following completion of their training at YMCA. In 2011, 26 of 30 learners (85 per cent) who were enrolled in the National Certificate in Security course gained employment in this area on completion. The remaining learners went into employment in other sectors. Organisation records show that in 2011, 90 per cent of those enrolled in the heavy trade course in Timaru gained employment, often before completion of the course.

The employment skills programmes reviewed at each site, which included Steps, Workplace Computing, and training towards the National Certificate in Employment Skills, have met the 2011 employment targets and the target for an average of three unit standards achieved per learner.

The early childhood programme is also achieving above the expected TEC performance indicators for course completion and employment or enrolling in further study. Learners are also achieving parenting skills as well as increased confidence in their ability to study. This is demonstrated by the number of learners who continue on to further studies in this area or to other fields on completion of the course.

YMCA has a strategy to monitor students' literacy and numeracy progression while studying. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed at enrolment, and some YMCA sites' analyses of end-of-course assessments show that learners increase these skills by two to three steps on the TEC progression chart. However, at this stage, not all sites have formally assessed learners' literacy and numeracy

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

progressions to identify whether they are improving the literary and numeric skills of learners.

The organisation reviews individual outcomes during the national education managers' monthly conference calls, and at six-monthly education manager meetings. Each region's individual board also receives reports on outcomes at regular chief executive and board meetings to monitor progress against the TEC outcomes. The organisation uses data from individual programmes to internally benchmark all programmes across sites.

The national office meta-analysis will be completed in 2011 for comparison with future outcomes. This should help improve data for cross-referencing programme success internally across time and sites.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

There is evidence that the organisation provides training that is needed by learners and the communities in which it operates. This was confirmed through interviews and feedback from learners and through the noticeable improvement to learners' well-being as a result of the support and skills they receive while on YMCA programmes. However, the organisation as a whole does not formalise feedback from employers at this stage, which would provide better data to analyse which courses are in demand and whether the graduates had appropriate skills and knowledge.

In order to facilitate better employment outcomes for its learners, YMCA established employment broker roles for most of the sites at the end of 2010. This was at the time when the funding requirements for most of the programmes changed, with an emphasis on getting people work-ready and into employment in shorter timeframes than previously. The initiative of the organisation in responding to the changes in the funding environment early on has meant it has had consistently high employment outcomes for its learners. This was demonstrated with the 100 per cent (30 learners) employment outcome for graduates in Tauranga's early childhood education programme.

Not only is YMCA concerned with individual academic and personal success, but it also follows through on its philosophy of building stronger families and stronger communities. YMCA does this by providing community parenting skills programmes, partnerships with local community health organisations, gym facilities, as well as educational programmes. The Timaru centre also manages a highly regarded services academy-style programme for local 16 and 17-year-olds as an alternative to traditional school-based learning.

In Nelson, learners from the security course assisted with security following the Christchurch earthquake and were employed to help with increased demand for people with security skills during the recent Rugby World Cup. This showed the value of the training to the sector and the community, as well as giving the learners an opportunity to consolidate their learning and the confidence to undertake security work.

The organisation also has links with local chamber of commerce groups to facilitate networks in order to raise awareness of its learners and provide work experience and future employment opportunities. In addition, some YMCA sites support OSCAR programmes with facilities and assistance for learners. The organisation has connections to community services such as WINZ (Work and Income New Zealand), police, and refugee groups to facilitate services to its learners and to help the various agencies with their clients.

The learner surveys have been nationally implemented and already are showing good information about the value of the training for learners, with very high satisfaction rates (over 90 per cent in most cases).

Staff, including general managers/chief executives, at individual sites demonstrated comprehensive knowledge of their learners and regional employment needs and responded by providing training that gave their learners the required, relevant skills to study further in their chosen field or to gain employment. However, once the feedback on courses is nationally coordinated, along with the employment broker outcomes for 2011, the organisation should be better able to understand the value of YMCA programmes overall.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The programmes were originally designed with regional community needs in mind to help ensure positive outcomes. As each region has different regional training needs, the YMCA has many sites. The sites visited during the external evaluation and review demonstrated that they were connecting with local employers and other secondary and tertiary education providers to understand their needs.

Guest speakers are used at the sites reviewed to provide information about the employment environment as well as the future study options available. This has often led to employment opportunities as employers are able to meet the learners in a supportive environment. However, for some programmes, such as the security programme, there was feedback on the overuse of workbooks as a learning method, rather than more practical learning activities, which learners said would be more effective for their learning.

Nelson has a strong pool of employers which it relies on to provide relevant feedback on the content of the training, but the branch could also incorporate more feedback from the retail and early childhood employers to ensure that learners have the relevant skill sets and realistic expectations of employment in these sectors.

Other programmes, such as the heavy trade programme in Timaru, provide relevant practical and written learning activities which are suited to learners' needs and give them the skills to become employed.

The early childhood programme in Tauranga demonstrated high success in matching learners to relevant programmes to help them into further training in this area or to find employment. There are a variety of activities to help students, including work experience opportunities, guest speakers, as well as workbooks.

Nationally, the organisation has instituted a learner survey and uses this feedback to ensure that learners are satisfied and the training is meeting their needs. Timaru is one site that has recent examples where the staff have listened to student feedback and implemented changes to facilitate learners' needs, such as providing transport for Ashburton learners (each of the sites provides transport for its learners locally), and the use of reader/writers for some assessments. Each site is encouraged to use the national literacy and numeracy assessment tool, which helps to determine additional learning needs and measure progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Most centres are using this tool since it was implemented at the end of 2010 as part of the overall organisation's strategy to monitor learners' literacy and numeracy improvements

YMCA has been reasonably successful in breaking down silos between sites to promote consistent teaching and learner support activities. The organisation has also fostered an environment through this sharing of knowledge that has led to better communication between tutors at each site so that tutors are able to provide teaching for all students. In addition, a more structured meeting schedule at educational management level and the introduction of the quality coordinator and education programme committee, with the better integration of regional and national education managers and CEOs, enables better sharing and understanding of needs overall.

Overall programme planning is conducted at the quality coordinator and education programme committee level to ensure that the regional branches provide programmes that contribute to the organisation's tertiary education strategy and WINZ needs. The national quality coordinator and education programme committee reviews programme outcomes weekly against funding targets. Employment and further education outcomes for each programme are reviewed to determine whether branch sites are maintaining regional relevance. Information is gathered using the educational review system as well as chief executive regional reports, to which tutors contribute. The information is used to allocate funding to relevant programmes based on the organisation's own funding criteria.

Accreditation issues are also managed at this level to ensure that sites have appropriate resources and facilities to deliver courses.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The national organisation supports tutors' professional development, which is integrated with tutor evaluation and performance management. Tutors are employed with the relevant teaching skills, with an emphasis on being able to relate to learners and have experience in the areas they are teaching.

Tutors provide individual support to assist learners with any problems. Tutor evaluations are used to determine whether learners are succeeding, and extra tutoring time is available where required. The variety of learning activities helps to ensure that all learning styles are catered for. This is enhanced with the use of learning materials with embedded literacy and numeracy tasks. Some programmes use self-paced learning, as learners enrol at different stages throughout the year. This means that learners receive more individualised time with tutors, and learners said that this was useful as they could work on their areas of greatest need. The high attendance, monitored by tutors, is evidence that the learners are motivated and engaged with the training

Learners' progress is monitored using individualised goal-setting plans which learners use to see how well they are achieving. However, these plans could be reviewed as a number of learners commented that they did not find them useful.

Each site conducts its own internal moderation of assessments to ensure they are at the national standard. The assessment standards are also discussed at regional tutor meetings. The external moderation compliance requirements are coordinated at the national education management meetings and the results for this show that YMCA has met the majority of its moderation requirements.

However, systems for monitoring tutor performance at national level are fairly recent and will be improved with the roll-out of more comprehensive data collection and reporting to compare the outcomes for each region and across tutors teaching similar programmes.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

YMCA looks after its students on a personal level as well as monitoring their academic progress. This is evidenced by learner feedback and course outcomes. This holistic approach means that learners feel they can approach tutors with any problems, creating a supportive, family-like environment. Each site has access to other support services, such as counsellors, health professionals, and social workers, in cases where staff on site do not have the appropriate experience.

Each site conducts an initial one-to-one interview to determine the learner's current skills and to identify any needs. This includes the application of the online literacy and numeracy assessment tool. The information is used to help set educational and personal goals for learners which are then reviewed weekly. Tutors provide support for learners to achieve their goal of employment by assisting with securing job interviews, developing CVs, dressing for interviews, and career planning. The goal-setting books are used mainly by tutors to monitor progress.

Each YMCA branch provides transport and, in some cases, meals for learners. Achievements are also celebrated and family and friends are invited to support the learners. Overall, the organisation has appropriate systems and resources for tutors to build positive one-to-one relationships with all learners to enable them to achieve.

1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The vision of the organisation to build stronger families and communities is strongly evident from talking to tutors and learners at the sites visited, with the most valued outcome that of changing learners' lives. Programme reviews are conducted at local level to ensure they meet local employer needs. The educational management team also meets quarterly to review programme outcomes and relevance. However, there is still a focus on evaluating only the outcomes that are measured for funding contracts, and there is less information about the personal attributes that learners reported gaining.

The organisation has strived not only to ensure that sites are as consistent as possible in their delivery and quality of assessment, but also that the perception of the public is positive about the learners that enrol with YMCA. There is good interaction between regional offices at management level. This has been brought about by a number of national initiatives, including using the online survey software,

SurveyMonkey, to monitor learner satisfaction, introducing a centralised educational reporting system to monitor outcomes and provide reports to the boards regionally and nationally, and encouraging the sharing of information and good practices between tutors at each site.

The tutors valued the opportunity to share information as it enabled them to be flexible in helping learners to achieve their goals. This was evident from the high employment outcomes achieved through the relationship between the tutor and employment broker in Nelson. Effective information-sharing was also demonstrated by the tutors being able to cope when a tutor left recently, ensuring that the learners were not disadvantaged.

The individual sites have well-maintained facilities and resources and all are equipped with vehicles for transporting learners.

The national education management team has implemented a more comprehensive system of self-assessment since the previous EER and is able to monitor regional and national outcomes to identify where any improvements to programmes are required. However, an overall analysis of results for comparison is still to occur.

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: Employment Skills

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.3 Focus area: National Certificate in Security (Level 2) (Nelson)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.4 Focus area: Heavy Trade (South and Mid-Canterbury)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.5 Focus area: National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3) (Tauranga)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eeer/introduction/>*

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